

Dear Linwood Parents:

Joyce Epstein of Johns Hopkins University has developed a framework for defining six different types of parent involvement. This framework assists educators in developing school and family partnership programs. "There are many reasons for developing school, family, and community partnerships," she writes. "The main reason to create such partnerships is to help all youngsters succeed in school and in later life."

The following information is taken from Epstein's work. Please take the time to read through this information and see if any of these ideas can be helpful to us working together for children.

Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement and Sample Practices

1. **PARENTING:** Helping all families establish home environments to support children as students
 - Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy).
 - Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services.
 - Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school.
2. **COMMUNICATING:** Designing effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress.
 - Conferences with every parent at least once a year.
 - Language translators to assist families as needed.
 - Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.
3. **VOLUNTEERING:** Recruiting and organizing parent help and support.
 - School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.
 - Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families.
 - Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.
4. **LEARNING AT HOME:** Providing information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning.
 - Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade.
 - Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
 - Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work.
5. **DECISION MAKING:** Including parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.
 - Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.
 - Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.
 - Networks to link all families with parent representatives.
6. **COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY:** Identifying and integrating resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development.
 - Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services.

- Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.
- Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g. recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others).

How Can I Be Involved In My Child's Education?

Research studies consistently reveal that **high student achievement and self-esteem are closely related** to positive parental participation in education. Parents and schools need to work together so all children can succeed in school.

Almost everyone agrees that parents are, after all, their children's first and most important teachers. You, as a parent, have important knowledge about your child's likes, dislikes, needs, and problems that the school may not be aware of. You may also have ideas for improving your child's school. But even though studies show that most parents want to be involved in their children's education, they may not be exactly sure how to go about it, especially if, like most parents, they work during the school day.

Parents often ask the following question:

What Can I Do To Involve Myself With My Child's School?

Here are other ideas:

- Visit your child's classroom; a visit will give you an idea of what your child does at school and how he or she interacts with other children.
- Volunteer to help in the classroom as an assistant (listening to children read, for example, or serving as an aide during computer work).
- Support student events and performances by helping with them (such as sewing costumes or painting scenery for a school play) and by attending them.
- If your school has a Parents' Room/Lounge or Parent Center, drop in to meet other parents and teachers there, or to pick up information and materials.
- Participate in workshops that are offered, such as those on child development or concerns that parents have (or help plan such workshops through your district or PTA).
- Take advantage of parent-teacher contracts (perhaps agreeing to read with your child for a certain amount of time each night).
- Ask your child's teacher if he or she has materials that you can use to help your child at home and to supplement homework.
- Be part of decision-making committees about school issues and problems, such as a Parent Advisory Committee.

Thank you again for all you do to assist in our school. If you would like to become a school volunteer or have suggestions for our school, please call Mr. Martin @ 651-982-1901